

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following claim listing is to replace all prior listings of claims.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended): A method for producing a cacao fat/oil-rich chocolate drink, which comprises:

the step of extracting cacao nibs with water, and

the step of removing insoluble solids from the extract to obtain a fat/oil-rich cacao nib extract, wherein the removal step comprises treatment of the extract obtained from the extraction step, in a disk centrifuge for two-phase (solid-liquid) separation,

wherein both steps are performed at a temperature higher than the melting point of cacao fat/oil, and wherein the step of removing insoluble solids is followed by a homogenization step.

Claim 2. (Original): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 1, wherein the liquid temperature in one of the steps of extracting cacao nibs with water and of removing insoluble solids from the extract is higher than that of the other step.

Claim 3. (Original): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 2, wherein the liquid temperature in the step of extracting cacao nibs with water is higher than that in the step of removing insoluble solids from the extract.

Claim 4. (Previously Presented): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 1, wherein the liquid temperature in both the steps of extracting cacao nibs with water and of removing insoluble solids from the extract or at least the liquid temperature in one of these steps, which is performed at a lower temperature, is set at any temperature higher than the melting point of cacao fat/oil, so that components to be contained in the chocolate drink can be controlled to select a taste preferred for the chocolate drink.

Claim 5. (Canceled).

Claim 6. (Previously Presented): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 1, wherein the cacao nib extract after removal of insoluble solids has a cacao fat/oil content of 1 g to 200 g when calculated per kg of cacao nibs before being extracted.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 1, wherein a liquid temperature higher than the melting point of cacao fat/oil is consistently used throughout the entire process, from the extraction step of cacao nibs to the homogenization step of the cacao nib extract.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 1, which further comprises adding a milk-derived ingredient.

Claim 9. (Original): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 8, wherein the cacao nib extract after removal of insoluble solids is mixed with a milk-derived ingredient prior to the step of homogenizing the cacao nib extract.

Claim 10. (Previously Presented): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 1, wherein the cacao nib extract after removal of insoluble solids is supplemented with cacao butter prior to the step of homogenizing the cacao nib extract.

Claim 11. (Previously Presented): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 1, wherein the resulting chocolate drink has a cacao fat/oil content of 20 mg/L to 20 g/L.

Claim 12. (Previously Presented): The method for producing the chocolate drink according to claim 1, wherein the chocolate drink is filled into a substantially transparent container.

Claim 13. (Previously Presented): A fat/oil-rich chocolate drink, which is obtained by the method according to claim 1.

Claim 14. (Original): The chocolate drink according to claim 13, which is filled into a substantially transparent container.

Claim 15. (Currently Amended): A method for producing a cacao fat/oil-rich chocolate drink, which comprises the step of removing insoluble solids from a hot water extract of cacao nibs to obtain a fat/oil-rich cacao nib extract, wherein the removal step comprises treatment of the hot water extract in a disk centrifuge for two-phase (solid-liquid) separation, and wherein the liquid temperature in the step of removing insoluble solids from the extract is set at a temperature higher than the melting point of cacao fat/oil, and wherein the step of removing insoluble solids is followed by a homogenization step.

Claim 16. (Currently Amended): A method for producing a cacao fat/oil-rich chocolate drink, which comprises:

the step of extracting cacao nibs with water, and

the step of removing insoluble solids from the extract to obtain a fat/oil-rich cacao nib extract, wherein the removal step comprises two-phase (solid-liquid) separation of the extract obtained from the extraction step,

wherein both steps are performed at a temperature higher than the melting point of cacao fat/oil, and wherein the step of removing insoluble solids is followed by a homogenization step.